

Stand out from the crowd

Application hints and tips

Application Process

Step 1 - Do Your Research: Before submitting an application, it is really important to research the company fully. You need to be absolutely sure the role you are applying for is something you genuinely want to do. Recruiters can easily identify applicants who are serial appliers and haven't done their homework.

Step 2 - Standing out from the crowd: To make sure you stand out from the crowd, make sure your application is really telling the recruiter something about you and why they should give you the opportunity to progress to the next stages of the selection process. A CV only says so much. Utilise your Cover Letter to really let the recruiters know more about who you are and your potential. Do not copy and paste information from the company's website to describe why you want to work for the company. Chances are we have already read the same thing a few hundred times that same day already. Be original.

Step 3 - Back to basics: Before submitting your final application check for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors they are simple things to correct but really stand out if they aren't right.

Online Testing

Step 4 - Practice Aptitude Testing: Aptitude Assessments and Situational Judgement Tests are now becoming commonplace in many companies selection processes. Completing practise assessments beforehand will give you the best opportunity to perform well. Make sure you are in a quiet environment so you won't be disturbed and most importantly relax.

Video Interview

Step 5 - Video interviews: As with online testing, online video interviewing is also becoming ever more popular for employers to use in their recruitment processes. The key thing to remember is to prepare for this type of interview in exactly the same way as you would for a face-to-face meeting. This includes preparing answers to anticipated question as well as thinking about your dress code. Make sure you do not complete your video interview in shorts and a t-shirt for example, as this does not give the best first impression.

Assessment Centre

Step 6 - Be prepared: Making sure you turn up to assessment centre prepared, on time and dressed appropriately is absolutely essential to starting the day on the right foot. Ensure you have planned your journey in advance, as well as alternative routes so if something does go wrong on the day you don't need to panic. Make sure you have all of the key contacts available so that if you are going to be late you can let someone know.

Step 7 - Networking: Although the main purpose of an assessment centre is to assess, many organisations ask key people to attend as business assessors at this stage in the process. We appreciate these environments can be nerve-wracking but, try your best during the breaks and lunch times to take the opportunity to talk to them about their role in the business and what they expect from graduates. This is likely to be your best opportunity to ask questions face-to-face with a member of staff already working for the company.

Step 8 - Group exercises: In group exercise it is all too easy to fall into the trap of going along with the group or taking over your peers in the hope you will stand out to the assessors. There is such a thing as the right balance. Employers are always looking for individuals who they can see are able to contribute their own ideas as well as consider and value the opinions of their peers and colleagues.

Final Interview

Step 9 - Face-to-face interview: For our graduate and apprentice programmes, your interview forms part of the assessment centre. At this stage, it's time to really show your potential. This stage is commonly a much more in-depth interview so be prepared for more challenging questions. In addition, be prepared to expand on such things as your CV and the answers you gave in your original application. Having a copy of each in the interview is even better so you can refer it if necessary.

Feedback

Step 10 - Feedback: Regardless of the outcome of your interview process, it is important to request feedback from an employer. If you are unsuccessful you will have the opportunity to discuss areas of improvement to then work in ahead of future assessment centres or interviews. If you are successful it is still important to understand whether the assessors identified any shortfalls, so that you can ensure actions to improve certain skills or behaviours a part of your personal development plan when you join the organisations.